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# The Vast Hufflepuff Conspiracy

## Chapter 1

**A/N:** I don't own Harry Potter and wouldn't particularly care to. I would like a rental agreement with option to buy for Hermione Granger. A short term contract with Nymphadora Tonks wouldn't be turned down. A Long-term agreement with Luna Lovegood would probably be a whole lot of fun. Any time Padma Patil wants to open negotiations, call me and oh for a weekend with Fleur. Oddly Lavender and Padma's sister (despite being her twin) Parvati do nothing for me...

### Part One

*"It is somewhat interesting that Hufflepuffs and Hufflepuff graduates of Hogwarts are victims of homicide and other violent crimes to a much lesser extent than Gryffindors, Ravenclaws, and Slytherins. There is, however, no adequate explanation for this. This fact is viewed as a statistical anomaly."*

*-- "Hogwarts, a History", 155th edition.  
Theodore Entwhistle, Editor (Hufflepuff 1865)*

When he looked back, even a month later, Harry found he had only scattered memories of the next few days. It was as though he had been through too much to take in any more. The recollections he did have were very painful. The worst, perhaps, was the meeting with the Diggorys that took place the following morning.

They did not blame him for what had happened; on the contrary, both thanked him for returning Cedric's body to them. Mr. Diggory sobbed through most of the interview. Mrs. Diggory's grief seemed to be beyond tears.

"He suffered very little then," she said, when Harry had told her how Cedric had died. "And after all, Amos... he died just when he'd won the tournament. He must have been happy."

**-Excerpt from Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire.**

### The Review

The Hufflepuff Council was assembling in what my Auntie Amelia described as our most holy of holies. Helga's Redoubt. A chamber accessible to students only through the Hufflepuff common room, and even then only after all six of the currently serving Prefects pressed their wands to the House Crest over the Common Room's main fireplace and incanted Helga's name. Godric Gryffindor had his Armory with his weapons and armor. Rowena Ravenclaw had her near mythic Potions Labs, Salazar Slytherin had his sinister Chamber with its secrets and monster, Helga Hufflepuff had her Redoubt, a meeting hall dedicated to the continued unity of her house.

Helga herself chaired the very first meeting of the Hufflepuff Council. The House Histories tell us that at the time it was called the 'Council of Badgers' and indeed even Hufflepuff House itself was known as The Badger House. The current name only came into use following the death of our beloved Helga, when the house and Council renamed themselves by unanimous vote. The other houses (Lion, Serpent and Corvid) followed suit to honor their own founders shortly thereafter.

As new fifth years, my entire cohort was inducted into the Council. To be clear, everyone in the house knew about the Council, actual membership wasn't offered until fifth year, but during their indoctrination sessions with Professor Sprout, every first year 'Puff was told of the Council and informed of the first and most important rule of the Hufflepuff Council. No One Talks About the Hufflepuff Council to any outsider. Ever. Full Stop.

I recall first year how we all we all thought that the First Rule was so funny. It wasn't until after the Christmas Hols third year we found out just how serious the First Rule was, when it was discovered that Sally-Anne Perks had mentioned the Council to her cousin, who was a sixth year Ravenclaw.

The next day Sally-Anne was gone, and everyone in the house got a refresher interview with Professor Sprout, wherein she explained the importance of the First Rule again. Sally-Anne's disappearance frightened me to no end. I ended up begging Auntie Amelia to meet with me on the next Hogsmeade weekend. She explained that both Sally-Anne and her cousin had any and all references to the Council obliterated from their memories, and that Sally-Anne, having proven that she could not be trusted with house secrets, had been transferred to Beauxbatons to complete her education. Auntie smiled at my concerns and told me that it was my Hufflepuff side that had me so worried about my friend.

So, we filed into the Redoubt for the first Council meeting of the year. As per tradition we were seated in our cohorts, my best friend Hannah was to my left, and Justin Finch-Fletchley sat to my right. The room filled quickly. I was surprised to see the seats on the far side of the Redoubt filled with so many adults. "Legacy 'Puffs" the Seventh year Prefect told me when I asked. The floor of the chamber was a raised platform with a row of seats. Those seats were also filling up. I could see my Auntie Amelia, and it was clear that Auntie was not happy in the slightest. That was when I spotted her.

Cho Chang. Ernie Macmillan, who was sitting on the other side of Hannah just stared at the Ravenclaw in amazement.

"This is the first time in living memory a non-Hufflepuff has been allowed into a meeting of the Council!" He whispered. The rest of us nodded. Ernie was our resident history buff.

Cho sat next to the Diggorys, in the row of seats reserved for visitors down on the floor facing the raised platform. "This must be about Cedric." Hannah breathed in my ear. "That's the only possible reason for *her* to be here."

I fought off a smile. A lot of the 'Puff Witches harbored resentment toward Cho for daring to date Cedric, causing him to be unavailable to his housemates. Until this moment I hadn't known that Hannah had been one of them. I wondered if Ernie noticed.

Evidently he had. "I wonder..." Ernie said with a slight smile. "Will the concealed council's counsel console Cho?"

Professor Sprout entered the chamber, preventing any of the normal violence that Ernie's word play usually garnered him. Our Head of House was followed by Madam Pomfrey. That struck me as odd that I hadn't known that the School Healer was a 'Puff... Professor Sprout was obviously furious, yet another oddity. Our Head of House was usually the model of the jovial elder witch.

The Head of Hufflepuff house reached the podium, and looked out at the assembled Council. "Thank you for coming so promptly for this first meeting of the Council for the year. As all of you know, one of our own was murdered last year. This session of the Council is convened to determine exactly what happened. Rumors are rife in the castle and indeed the world at large. The only witness to this unforgivable act of violence was Harry Potter, who says that Cedric was killed by Peter Pettigrew on the orders of You-Know-Who. The official position of the Ministry of Magic is that Potter is delusional, that both Pettigrew and He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named have been dead for more than a decade and that Cedric's death was due to 'Misadventure' whatever that means."

"The Ministry has made no effort to discover the truth of the situation. I find this to be unacceptable. In accordance with the ancient rules of the Hufflepuff Council, I call for a Hufflepuff Inquiry."

Auntie Amelia stood. "Amelia Bones, Hufflepuff cohort of '36. You all know me. Despite the best efforts of our Housemates, the Ministry remains corrupt and incapable of doing what needs done. I second Pomona's call for an Inquiry."

"The call for an Inquiry has been seconded." Professor Sprout continued. "Any discussion?"

Silence filled the Redoubt. "The call for an Inquiry has been seconded and no discussion has been offered. I now call for the vote. All in favor of a Hufflepuff Inquiry say 'Aye'"

Helga's Redoubt rang with the rumbling 'Ayes' of the assembled members of my family's traditional House.

"Opposed?"

This was met with silence.

## The Inquiry

"The proposal passes." Professor Sprout intoned. "I call the Hufflepuff Inquiry to order. Some of you may have noticed Miss Cho Chang, Ravenclaw cohort of 97 in the gallery. Given her relationship with Cedric Diggory she was offered the chance to sit in on our inquiry in order to know what had happened to the young man she had betrothed herself to. Miss Cho has agreed to be voluntarily obliviated upon the completion of the Inquiry; she will be left with the knowledge of what has happened to Cedric, but not of the Council itself."

Sprout paused while the assembled Hufflepuffs digested this information, and then she continued. "I call Hogwarts Healer Poppy Pomfrey."

The Healer stepped up to the podium with a small file of notes. "Most of you know me. Poppy Pomfrey, Hufflepuff cohort of 1933. I treated Harry Potter after his return from his purported encounter with the Dark Lord Voldemort, but not before he was attacked by the Death Eater Barty Crouch Jr, on the castle grounds."

A gasp ran through the room. I, like most of the assembled students, had no idea who this 'Barty Crouch Jr.' was supposed to be, but evidently he was well known to the adults.

"After some stressful interviews with the Headmaster and the Minister of Magic," The expression on Madam Pomfrey's face spoke volumes as to what she thought of those two men stressing a patient in her care, "I managed to get young Potter to sleep. This is when I did something I am more than a little ashamed of. After the ward was cleared of everyone except my patient, I dosed Harry Potter with a hypnotic potion and woke him up. I wanted to hear the story of what happened to our Cedric with my own ears."

The Healer took a drink from the glass in front of her. "What he told me is practically word for word what he tried to tell everyone who would listen. Voldemort is back. Cedric was killed by Peter Pettigrew. In addition he named all of the Death Eaters he saw that night."

The room was silent waiting for her to finish. "A hypnotic is not Veritaserum, not by a long shot. A disciplined mind can still lie while under a hypnotic. While I do not believe that Harry Potter has sufficient discipline to resist, I cannot offer what he told me as evidence. I however believe him."

"Following this evening's Welcoming Feast, I requested Mr. Potter report to the Hospital wing that I might check on his recovery from the injuries he sustained at the end of the last term. Once he was there I 'discovered' something that I could inform the Headmaster required he be monitored overnight. As I have already told Madam Bones and Professor Sprout, I have Harry Potter waiting outside this room under another dose of the hypnotic potion. I propose that he be brought into the Redoubt and given Veritaserum so that we can find out exactly what happened. The hypnotic will guarantee that Mr. Potter will not remember being here. This will allow us to finally know what happened that horrible day."

Auntie Amelia stood up and said, "I feel I need to inform everyone here that doing this is patently illegal. That being said, I, for one, believe that it is necessary. We will be invading Harry Potter's privacy in the most distasteful way possible, and if, as I suspect, he is telling the truth we will owe a

debt to the young man that we may never be able to repay.”

The Redoubt burst into a flurry of conversations as everyone seemed to feel the need to discuss what Auntie had said with their neighbor. Ernie, Hannah, Justin and I just looked at one another. Between us, we had suspected Harry of so many things over the years, most recently that he was trying to steal Cedric’s glory, and each time we had been wrong.

“The Inquiry will come to order!” The magically amplified voice of Professor Sprout rang out. “The Inquiry will now vote on this proposed action. All in favor signify by saying ‘Aye.’”

The walls of the Redoubt practically vibrated from the collective ‘AYE!’ that rang out from the crowd.

“Opposed?”

A scattering of ‘No’ came from various places in the cavernous room. One older Wizard, easily Dumbledore’s senior, stood.

“Algernon Blakeslee, Hufflepuff cohort of 1829. ’Tis plain ye intend to do this... this evil thing. This invasion of the boy’s mind. ’Tis wrong, wrong I tells ye. ’Tis clear that each of ye believe the boy, but ye want to use his words to convince the rest of us. I tells ye, I be convinced now without what ye’r about to do. From what I’ve heard of the Potter Boy, he would have agreed if ye’d only asked, but ye didn’t, did ye? Even criminals are treated better than this. I’ll be leavin’, havin’ no part of this.”

The old man made his way to the exit. He was joined by almost two dozen others. His words caused me to second guess my vote of Aye. Looking around I could see I wasn’t the only one having second thoughts.

“The Ayes have it.” Professor Sprout continued, not looking anywhere nearly as self assured as she had been. Somehow, seeing that even the leadership of my house sometimes felt a bit of doubt somehow made me feel a bit better. “Poppy, bring Mr. Potter in.”

## The Witness

The room quieted again as Madam Pomfrey made her way to the anteroom, and then she returned half guiding and half carrying what appeared to be a very drunk Harry Potter.

“Madam Pomfrey, you gotta tell me where to get some more of that purple stuff...” the boy who lived slurred. “I mean it’s great. Really great. I mean Kickapoo Joy Juice is a really stupid name, but wow, its great stuff.”

“We need you to sit over here Mr. Potter.”

“kay.” Harry stumbled over his own feet, ending up flat on his back looking up into the gallery. “Ha! I fell down! Hey, there’s Hannah!” He said recognizing my best friend. “Hi Hannah!” Harry waved at her from where he laid on the floor. Harry returned his attention to his healer. “Hannah hates me.”

Hannah gasped at my side. “I don’t.” she whispered.

“She does.” Harry continued nodding enthusiastically. “She thought I was Slytherin’s heir. Ha! I wasn’t, but I can talk to snakes. Have you ever spoken to a snake Madam Pomfrey?”

“No, Harry, I haven’t.”

“They’re not the most sparkling convo... conver... conversationalists; mostly they wanna talk about food and going to warm places. Hannah knows I can talk to snakes, and that old Sal could talk to snakes so that makes me a bastard just like Sal, ’cept he probably wasn’t such a bastard, you know? Probably jus’ a thousand years of bad press. I wonder if the kids back then made buttons that said “Godric Rules” then flashed “Sal Sux”? Hannah had a button last year. It was supposed to flash between ‘Support Cedric Diggory’ and ‘Potter Stinks’ but hers always seemed to say I stunk.” That seemed to sober Harry a bit. “Do I stink Madam Pomfrey? I shower every day, but there were so many of those buttons... Do I stink?”

“No Harry.” The older witch bent down to help him back to his feet. “People were emotional last year. Sometimes that makes them do cruel things.”

“I guess.” The boy who lived said as he stood up. “Hey, there’s Hannah! Hi Hannah” and he waved at her again with a beaming smile, seemingly having forgotten the last few seconds.

Hannah managed another weak wave to him.

“HEY SUSIE!” the drunken boy suddenly yelled when our eyes met. He ambled over to where I was sitting and leaned on the railing in front of me, swaying slightly. “HEY! God you’re beautiful! I could look at you all day! The guys in the dorm say I shouldn’t ask you out because you’ve got red hair, and my mum had red hair and that dating a girl with the same color hair as my mum would be weird and sick and weird.”

I couldn’t believe that of all the pretty girls at the school Harry and his friends talked about me.

“Come on Harry.” Madam Pomfrey tried yet again to get Harry moving toward the chair waiting for him.

“I mean the only reason I know that mum had red hair is because people tell me she did, all the pictures I’ve seen are in black and white. Why don’t Wizarding photos come in color? Muggle pictures don’t move, but they’re color.” He allowed Pomfrey to guide him toward the chair. “Isn’t Susie pretty? I think she’s pretty, and god but she’s got great boobies... I mean seriously, we call them her ‘Hufflepuppies’ in the dorm, though she’d probably kill us if she found out. So Shhh!” He said with a finger in front of his lips. “Hermione hexed us all good when she heard us talking about

Susies' puppies. She likes Susie too. She says that Susie is too good for us."

The pair had finally made it to the chair when Harry suddenly turned to Madam Pomfrey and repeated himself. "You gotta tell me where to get some more of that purple stuff... Kickapoo Joy Juice is a stupid name really, but wow, its great stuff." He sat down at her urging.

"Mr. Potter?" Auntie Amelia approached Harry.

"Madam Bones? Hi! Are you Susie's mum?"

"The hypnotic has something of an intoxicating effect as well as affecting short term memory." Madam Pomfrey noted.

"No kidding?" Auntie asked before turning to Harry. "No Harry, I'm her Aunt."

"She's pretty."

"Yes she is." I felt my blush returning. I knew that Auntie could never resist a chance to tease me. "I hear you'd like to date her."

"Oh, yeah, but I can't."

"Because of her red hair?" Auntie looked up and locked eyes with me.

"Yeah... No. I mean everyone says that would be weird, but the real reason is I'm going to die." He said matter of factly.

"You're going to die?"

"Yeah." Once again he appeared to sober a bit. "Voldemort is going to kill me."

Gasps filled the room at the mention of the forbidden name.

"Oh come on!" Harry said looking around the room, "It's just a made up name, and it doesn't mean anything." Harry swayed on the chair for a moment. "You know Madam Bones; I've never understood one thing about the whole 'everyone afraid to say Voldemort' thing, if no one ever says the name, so how does anyone know to be afraid of it? They don't even write it down! That's really really stupid."

"I agree, it probably is stupid Harry. What makes you think he's going to kill you?"

"Well, he keeps coming back. He tried to kill me when I was less than two years old. He tried to kill me first year when he was riding in Professor Quirrel's head trying to get the Philosopher's Stone, he tried to kill me second year in the chamber of secrets when he had possessed Ginny Weasley, and he tried to kill me last year after the stupid Triwizard Cup portkeyed Cedric and me to the graveyard, how many times can I get lucky before he manages it? As long as the Death Wankers like Lucius Malfoy are around any girl I went out with would be in danger." Harry seemed to think for a moment. "Hey, maybe I should date Pansy Parkinson!" He had amused himself so much by that comment he fell off the chair laughing.

"Harry" my Auntie said as she helped Harry back into the chair. "We want to talk to you about the day Cedric died."

"Cedric died. It was all my fault." Harry looked up and spotted the Diggorys. "Mr. Diggory? Mrs. Diggory? It was all my fault. I'm so sorry. I was trying to let the real champion win; I didn't know that sharing the cup with Cedric would get him killed."

"Harry." Auntie said, getting his attention. "We would like you to take a potion. One that would only let you tell the truth."

"Verasim? Snape said something about that last year." Harry's brow furrowed. "That Snape is a right bastard, you know? Why would anyone who hates kids so much be a teacher? 'Potter! Your toenails are growing too loudly!'" Harry said in an uncanny impersonation of our Potions Professor, "Twenty billion points from Gryffindor."

"Yes, Veritaserum. We want to know exactly what happened to Cedric. You taking the Veritaserum would allow us to know for certain."

"Oh." Harry rocked back and forth in the chair for a moment. "This is why Madam Pomfrey gave me the purple stuff isn't it?"

"The Joy Juice will keep you from remembering this Harry." Madam Pomfrey said.

"So you can have secrets, but I can't?" He thought for a moment then grinned, "What the hell. Sure, I'll take your potion, on one condition."

"What's that Harry?"

"Don't tell Susie what I said about how pretty she is."

## The Guilt

I couldn't believe it. Harry had forgotten I was here. With each word out of Harry's mouth I was more ashamed of what we were doing. The potion had Harry completely out of control. Hannah and I shared a look, and then we both made a move to stand up.

Amos Diggory beat us to it. "Amelia, stop this."

The man had seemingly aged twenty years since the night his son died. "There is no reason for this. We all know the boy is telling the truth. Old Blakeslee is right, this is an evil thing."

Amos, we need to know.”

“We do know Amelia. Harry has told us what happened. If you need to use the Veritaserum, wait until he’s in his right mind and ask him, or use his memories in a pensieve. Anyone who knows him would tell you he would agree to it. The boy deserves to be treated better than this.”

“He brought Cedric back to us” Mrs. Diggory added. “He risked his life to bring my boy back to me. This isn’t right. You believe him, we believe him. This just isn’t right.”

“I agree.” Justin was on his feet next to me. “I accused him of setting a snake on me second year, a snake conjured by Draco Malfoy. A snake that any fool could see Harry was trying to calm down. I was one of those wearing the Potter Stinks badges. I wore it even after Cedric told me that Harry wanted nothing to do with the Tournament. I’m ashamed of myself. If we do this I will be ashamed of my House.”

“He was put on trial for defending himself Amelia.” An older Witch called from the far gallery. I recognized *Griselda Marchbanks as the speaker.* “*The Full Wizengamot empanelled for a case of under aged magic. Explain to me how what we are doing is any better than the actions of that idiot Fudge.*”

“*Fudge is an idiot!*” Harry agreed. “*And that froggie broad that was at the welcoming feast looks like a winner too.*” He looked around. “*Madam Pomfrey, have you got any more of that purple stuff? Hey Justin! How you doin? You gotta try this purple stuff!*”

Hannah stood up. “Someone had better alert the obliviators and get my transfer to Beauxbatons started. As soon as Harry sobers up I’m telling him what we’ve done to him.”

I stood next to my friend. “And me.” I shouted.

“And Me!” Ernie and Megan Jones chorused.

Throughout the Redoubt guilt about what we were doing spread. Aunt Amelia saw what was happening. She tried to regain control. “This is what we voted. This is the will of the house.”

“NO!” Madam Marchbanks shouted. “Evil is evil even if it is popular. You know this Amelia.”

I watched as Auntie, Madam Pomfrey and Professor Sprout huddled together. Their discussion took only seconds, and then Professor Sprout returned to the Podium.

“Fellow Hufflepuffs, I have erred. In my indignation at the loss of one of our own with no apparent action by the Ministry, I was determined to use the power of our house to do something. In my hubris, I forgot that young Mr. Potter is a human being as well.”

“Nah, I’m a freak.” Harry chuckled. “Just ask my relatives.”

“I think perhaps our guest should be taken somewhere where he can sleep off Madam Pomfrey’s potion so that I can apologize to him properly in the morning.” Professor Sprout looked toward Hannah and me. “Miss Abbott, Miss Bones, would you please escort Mr. Potter to the guest suite?”

Hannah and I left the gallery and approached Harry as the assembled Hufflepuffs began speaking among themselves.

“Hey Hannah!” Harry said brightly. “Hey Susie. When did you guys get here?”

Hannah took his left arm and I took his right, together we lifted our classmate to his feet.

“We just stopped by to get you to bed Harry.” I said pulling his arm around my shoulder while Hannah did the same.

“Both of you?” Harry seemed shocked. “I appreciate the vote of confidence, but I’m really pissed even if you can’t tell, I don’t think that I could...”

“We’re PUTTING you to bed, you prat.” Hannah laughed. “Not TAKING you to bed.”

“Oh.” Harry pouted a bit. “Would it have killed you to have let me think I was going to be the luckiest guy in the castle at least until I fell asleep?”

“It might have killed you.” I noted dryly.

“Oh. Hey Hannah! Do you know where the Dark Lord keeps his armies?”

“No, Harry where?” Hannah asked giving me an odd look.

“Up his sleeves!” Our very drunk friend doubled over in laughter. I found myself wondering if I would ever be so drunk that joke would be funny.

“Through here Harry.” I said pushing the door open. The light sconces flamed to life and the room was lit revealing a Hogwarts standard four poster bed.

“You know...” Harry said, looking at the room. “I have no bloody idea where I am. That’s odd isn’t it?”

“You’re in a guest room in the Hufflepuff dorms.” I explained.

“Wow. Cool. I don’t think the Gryffindors even HAVE a guest suite.” He looked around again. “Where am I?”

“Let’s just get you out of those robes Ok?” Hannah said.

“Ok.”

Hannah put up with his fumbling with his clothing for almost twenty seconds before she pushed him onto the bed and started pulling his clothing off.

“Hannah!” I said, a bit shocked.

“What?” she asked as she undid his belt and pulled his trousers off. “Four younger brothers Susie. Nothing I’ve not seen before. In fact, he’s cleaner than most of what I’ve seen before.”

Harry lay on the bed in his school uniform shirt and boxers, looking more than a little disoriented. “Susie?”

“What is it Harry?”

“Are you going to have your way with me?”

“No Harry. I’m just putting you to bed.” I removed his glasses and set them on the bedside table, before pulling the comforter over him.

“Oh.” He said, his eyes closing. “Damn.”

Hannah looked at me and smiled. “Even pissed out of his skull he knows how to feed a girl’s ego.”

“Tell me about it.”

====oooOOOooo====

**A/N2: The idea that the ‘Puffs are actually running everything in the British Wizarding Society (entire Wizarding World?) is certainly not an original one, but of course as everyone who has ever looked into the Vast Hufflepuff Conspiracy knows that there is no Vast Hufflepuff Conspiracy, and those who say that there is all seem to meet with ‘accidents’. That being said, I would like to point out that this is a work of ‘fiction’ and I am not in need of a personal interview with Big Boss... I mean Professor Sprout...**

**A/N3: Oh, and Kickapoo Joy Juice is of course the property of the Al Capp estate. Just remember, the only real Kickapoo Joy Juice is made by Lonesome Polecat & Hairless Joe, and if it needs more body, they throw one in!**

**A/N4: The story isn’t done, another chapter perhaps... When I get around to it.**